



Tom Singer
Oral History Transcription
March 3, 2005 [Side A]

Interviewed by: Kathy O'Dell and David Healey

Place of interview: Office of Tom Singer

Date of interview: March 3, 2005

Approximate length of interview: 47 minutes

Transcribed by: Howard Dukes, staff, Civil Rights Heritage Center

Date of transcription: June 2018

Summary: Tom Singer is a South Bend attorney who graduated from Central High School in 1953. He was a basketball player there. He then went on to earn a bachelor's degree and a law degree from the University of Michigan before returning to South Bend and being involved in civil rights and fair housing issues in the city.

0:00:00 [David Healey]: Today is March 3, 2005. We're in the offices of attorney Tom Singer. Present is attorney Singer, Kathy O'Dell, and David Healey. We are conducting interviews for the Oral History Project at IUSB and the Center for History located in South Bend, Indiana. Good morning Mr. Singer.

[Tom Singer]: Good morning.

0:00:23 [DH]: Just a couple of quick questions. Kathy has several she wants to ask, but some background information.

[Interview is briefly interrupted by the sound of sirens in the background.]

Some background information: Where did you go to college?

[TS]: I went to the University of Michigan for undergrad school. Got a degree in 1956. Then went to law school at Michigan and graduated in 1959.

[DH]: What brought you to South Bend?

[TS]: I grew up in South Bend and came back here intending to go into politics and then found out that I didn't belong in politics, so I ended up practicing law.

[DH]: Politics, very interesting. So, you grew up in South Bend, and what schools did you attend in South Bend?

[TS]: Colfax elementary, Mussel junior high, and Central high school.

0:01:13 [DH]: I guess the question is, you were very prominent in the civil rights movement in the '60s—equal housing, fair employment, access to public accommodation. Was there some incident that started you out down this road? What made you become interested in civil rights?

[TS]: I don't know if there was any one interest or one incident, but going to Central High School—which was an integrated school... And there were some occasions when we would travel... the basketball team would travel. We went south. We could not get a hotel because we had African American players. And I remember one tournament in Jeffersonville, we slept in the in the gym room because we couldn't get a hotel with black players. So that... that is something I remembered.

[Kathy O'Dell]: And that was... What year was that?

0:02:20 [TS]: That would be 1951, I think that happened. We didn't have that problem north of Indianapolis, but south of Indianapolis we did. So, we had to make some changes as a result of that. And we heard friends who parents could not go to the theaters in South Bend without—at least on the first floor they had to sit on the second floor. So, I learned some of those things from students at Central.

0:02:54 [DH]: So, you witnessed this as a young man growing up in South Bend and sort of the two different types of South Bend that we had at that time. One for blacks and one for whites.

[TS]: Yeah.

[DH]: Ok.

[KOD]: Let me... I just want to interject... Is your mother... was Esther Singer also?

[TS]: Yes.

[KOD]: Because, I did run across a clipping on her when I was trying to get a little background information on you too, and it did mention something about she was kind of a pioneer with minority and low-income groups too.

[TS]: Yeah. That appeared, I think, in the obituary column that they did on her. And she... she was active in that respect too.

[KOD]: I'm assuming then the Esther Singer building at the 4-H Fairgrounds is her...

[TS]: Right.

[KOD]: Ok. It just dawned on me the other night all the years we had been going there that... Ok, there's a connection.

[TS]: Sure, sure.

0:03:46 [KOD]: So, you mentioned that you know you did witness some of these things as you were growing up. Could you give us some... after you did come back from the University of Michigan then, what you did get into? I have a few notes as far as in 1963 something Mayor Bruggner appointed

you to a bi-racial committee on the study of racial discrimination in South Bend and from there on the Human Relations Commission.

[TS]: Yeah. That was in response to president Kennedy's call for bi-racial committees in urban areas. And I think that was in 1963, and Mayor Bruggner—a Democrat—appointed the committee and asked me to be the chairman.

0:04:37 [KOD]: Was that the same... I was going over the Tom Broden interview... Was that the same group... he had mentioned a bi... an interracial group too that went around and kind of fielded complaints from the black community and then tried to work with the two parties resolving them. Or was that separate kind of a voluntary... kind of an unofficial group, because he did mention that you were a part of that along with... I forget all of the other names that he had listed there.

[TS]: There was a... something called the Citizens Fair Housing Committee, and that's where I first met Tom. And that was a group maybe a dozen at most who was interested in finding... exploring the difficulties that African Americans had in getting housing, and then we ultimately worked toward the passage of a fair housing ordinance.

0:05:34 [KOD]: So, would have that had been before or after the group in '63?

[TS]: That was before.

[KOD]: Before.

[TS]: It ran about the same time, and we did take testimony. One program, I think was at Notre Dame, where people who had been victims of discrimination actually came and gave testimony to a group. And the *South Bend Tribune* then took at least six of those and on the editorial page printed their testimony—which was virtually unheard of. And that would have been either '63 or '64.

0:06:18 [KOD]: And that was before the housing conference then. That was in, I think, '66 at Notre Dame?

[TS]: That would have been before '66.

[KOD]: Ok.

[TS]: And then as a following that... the citizens fair housing committee South Bend/Mishawaka, then came the mayor's Bi-Racial Committee in 1963. Bruggner then did not run for another term. Lloyd Allen ran—and I've forgotten the name of the Democrat who ran. Lloyd Allen won, and then the Bi-Racial Committee was terminated, and his Human Relations Committee was formed, and I was chairman of that for two years.

0:07:18 [KOD]: Ok, and then that then... was that... I get confused with the Human Relations and then the FEPC and there seems there were so many different ones.¹ I don't know if there was some kind of progression from one into the other?

[TS]: Yeah that human relations I think was called the committee... commission, ultimately and then moved into a Human Relations Commission.

[KOD]: With the FEPC?

[TS]: And I think as a part of that the FEPC. So that's kind of the progression.

0:07:51 [KOD]: Ok. And speaking of progression then, when you... when they did have the human relations and FEPC committee... What was the natural progression if someone was to bring a complaint, what were the steps you would go through as far as addressing that issue?

[TS]: I was not a part of that once it became a... ceased to being a committee and became a commission, which I think was established by an ordinance. I was not involved in that.

0:08:25 [KOD]: I do have the documents from the Slenderform case.²

[TS]: Oh yeah.

[KOD]: And that was... You were co-counsel, I guess representing the committee with J. Chester Allen at that time.

[TS]: I'd forgotten about that.

¹ By "FEPC," Ms. O'Dell is likely referring to the Federal Employment Practices Commission.

² Ms. O'Dell is likely referring to the former Slenderform Health Spa on Main Street in South Bend. They, among many other places, were sites where the Commission sent both black and white patrons undercover to investigate unfair or unequal treatment. Slenderform had quoted vastly lower prices to potential white patrons than they did African American patrons.

[KOD]: I... I guess I was kind of... In light of that I wondered how the progression was that it comes to that as far as... I'm assuming those...that person came in with a complaint to the human relations board, then... I don't know...

[TS]: Yeah.

[KOD]: It goes before a local... for a local hearing and then state hearing?

[TS]: I can't remember that started with the Mayor Allen's Human Relations Committee before it became a Commission? But I was involved in that. We had heard... I'm not sure who we... but that group had heard that there was... people were having problems even buying a membership there. So, the committee ordered... suggested that blacks and whites both try to apply for membership at the same time, so we could document what happened.

0:09:44 [KOD]: That was another one of my questions, if that was part of the investigation... like the investigative process? Kind of testing by the commission suggesting they do that, because there were several people... one I think was kind of a voluntary thing. One person mentioned to another and another one—I think it was Alonzo Watson—was enlisted to go down and see what the result was when he went in too.

[TS]: He could have been and from there it went... there actually was a hearing and that may have been the Indiana Civil Rights Commission.

[KOD]: I think it was, yeah.

[TS]: Took testimony and I was representing one or more of the people who had gone there to try to get...

0:10:31 [KOD]: As I remember the only people who actually gave testimony were the complainants. The people who actually worked at Slenderform took the fifth amendment or whatever. They wouldn't testify.

[TS]: Yeah, I can't remember what happened. I don't know if there was a lawsuit after that... after it went to...

[KOD]: I think there was one also going, because they mentioned something about they didn't know if testimony from this would involve something...

[TS]: Yes.

[KOD]: So, they were kind of trying to...

[TS]: It seems to me that I was involved in that lawsuit. But I didn't keep any records.

0:11:10 [KOD]: Do you by any chance remember any other lawsuits that... My area is public accommodations. I'm kind of interested in that. It seems like so far everything that I found mentioned probably occurred maybe in the city courts, and I've been told at the archives that pre- '76 those... that information has all been destroyed. And so, I didn't know if you kind of remembered any other cases that I can...

[TS]: There was a lawsuit that Billy Morris, the realtor, filed against the...

[DH]: Board of Realtors.

[TS]: Board of Realtors, and he was represented by Tom Schafer and Professor Rhodes of the Notre Dame Law School. And I don't remember the results of that. That was filed and heard I think by Judge Dempsey in the St. Joe [Joseph] Superior court.

0:12:11 [DH]: I just wrote an article about that that was in the *South Bend Tribune* two weeks ago.

[TS]: Oh, is that right? I must have missed that.

[DH]: Very interesting case

[TS]: Yeah, so there was that one. There was... I represented some black Muslims—this would have been in the mid-'60s—who filed a civil complaint in federal court. They were in the Indiana State Prison, and they filed it *pro se* by themselves and the judge [inaudible] asked me if I would represent them then. And so, we had an evidentiary hearing on what is religion and were they a religion and did they qualify under the first and fourteenth Amendments to have the same kind of religious services as other groups that did. And...

[KOD]: Was this Michigan City?

[TS]: Right. And the judge ruled in their favor—which was not unusual. There were half a dozen cases like that all over the country. So, there was that case and there may have been others I don't remember.

0:13:43 [KOD]: Were... Do you remember anything about the housing... were you in attendance at the housing conference then in 1966? Or... Audrey Wagner, I think, testified or was that was part of the group that testified and the editorials were in the *South Bend Tribune*?

[TS]: I think that was an earlier group before 1966, and I was not involved in the 1966. There was some illness in the family and I left doing that work in 1965, so.

0:14:21 [KOD]: I see... I also note that you worked on the housing committee on the Urban League in 1965? Did you belong to any other organizations like the NAACP or any of the other civil rights organizations?

[TS]: I joined the NAACP in college, and when I came back here I started to go to their meetings. They were... They commanded a lot of attention, but it was not a strong group locally. I was a delegate to their National Convention in '62, I think. And then, I worked with the Urban League in the Housing Committee for four years I think. And then there was... and then after that there was another housing committee. And I've forgotten the name of that. That was headed up by a fella by the name of Newman who had a Studebaker dealership. I've forgotten the name of that committee.

0:15:29 [KOD]: You mentioned that the NAACP wasn't very strong locally. I just saw a couple of clippings before I came in that in 1954, Charles Wills was talking about a case that again... a public accommodations [case] that one of the local [inaudible] was ruled on where someone was served locally, and he was asking for a clarification on what constituted public accommodations. And then I noticed a clipping about 10 years later after a civil rights bill had been signed into effect, and the local NAACP was asking was, basically taking a stance that they weren't going to challenge the way I was... I was kind of getting the impression that Wills was talking about, challenging different areas of public accommodation. To make it known that people have rights but take it more on an individual basis and not really push so much for it.

0:16:24 So, what do you think as far as locally would kind of be, since the NAACP wasn't necessarily that strong, what would be more of the pushing... a force that was kind of with these individual groups... the housing groups, the interracial groups, pushing for more progress in the area of civil rights?

[TS]: I remember Charlie Wills, and we worked together, and his wife—Euriella—they really were the NAACP. The two of them... there were a handful of other people, but it wasn't a great number of people that ever came to meetings. The Urban League was much stronger, a lot more support. And I don't remember anything about when they're not going to push. I don't remember that.

0:17:25 [KOD]: I don't necessarily recall them saying "we're not going to push." But it left the impression... was that as a group we're not as a push really challenge that. Make sure that people have the rights, we'll help them with it, but it will be on an individual. They used the word "normal" challenge rather than actually going out and marching or anything like that. It was more of the impression that I got from that.

David, do you have anything that you want to add. I don't really want to keep...

0:17:56 [DH]: I have a couple of things. Of course, you mentioned the NAACP was a weak organization and historically in South Bend it always has been. It had some days of strength in the late '30s when they met up with J. Chester Allen, Wills, and Zilford Carter and attacked the Natatorium situation. But, by the time you were back in town, they had very... lack of membership. They just couldn't' much traction in South Bend—especially in the '60s when the local African American community was looking to the NAACP for leadership.

Now, Dr. Chamblee was president of the NAACP for a short period of time. In an interview with him he told me he left the NAACP he started the Black American Coalition here I town in 1960s. Did you... did you ever have any dealings with Dr. Chamblee?

[TS]: Oh, yes. Yes, he was in... he was on that bi-racial committee I'm sure, and we worked together on some things. We were in a march promoting the fair housing idea, but I don't remember the coalition.

0:19:17 [DH]: It was a very short-lived group. All during the 1960s.

[TS]: It was a committee called... there was something called the Coordinating Council on Human Relations in 1965, and that was a coalition of all of the groups in town, but I don't think that lasted long.

[KOD]: Was that... Did that include interfaith churches and so forth? Was it...

[TS]: It might have. I don't think that. I don't think that lived very long.

0:20:05 [DH]: How strong were your connections with the black community? Did you ever feel that you had a real connection with them? Because, reason I asked that is people like Wills, and Carter, and Dr. Chamblee were sometimes viewed as the elites with respect of the NAACP. And in certain regard to them, and that African Americans who worked at Studebaker and who worked in the trades, didn't actually trust the attorneys so much. Did you ever feel that?

[TS]: I guess that's true. I don't think I was resented because I was picked as chairman of the Bi-racial Committee or continued as chairman of the Human Relations because I worked in the NAACP and the Urban League, but I don't know that that's a... I'm not sure how they felt.

0:21:16 If I think the thing that was interesting to me was that when we organized the Citizens Fair Housing Committee, I thought that it would be more appropriate to have an African American as the president, and the people on that committee did not want that. They didn't think that was, at that time, was... would be the most effective way. I remember Mrs. Curtis and Bill Morris felt the same way so. That's why I was...

[DH]: Mrs. Curtis? Josephine Curtis?

[TS]: Yeah.

[DH]: And William Morris counseled you on the... that they should have a white chairman?

0:22:11 [TS]: Yes. I said why don't *you*—either one of you—be president of this committee? And they thought at that time... they thought a white person would be more effective since the problem was the white community as opposed to the black community. The black community, they couldn't buy the housing, but because of white attitudes. And I think the same thing carried over to the...

[KOD]: Maybe because of the connections or the clout that you had in there?

[TS]: I don't know. I didn't push it. They didn't want to do it. And then the Human Relations... or the Bi-racial Committee, that came after Robert Weaver came to South Bend, and the Fair Housing Committee had a banquet... there were some 500 people there. It was amazing.

0:23:12 [KOD]: Now, did they... they eventually did pass a fair housing ordinance?

[TS]: Yes.

[KOD]: Because I think [in] one of the interviews, Harold Coleman was talking about the resistance that... and he was thinking '63 or '65, something like that they had as far as on the city council passing the ordinance him and J. Chester Allen were the only two that were for it, and they were really opposing it, and they were put out of office pretty much after that.

0:23:42 [TS]: Right I think after that Lloyd Allen came in in '64, I think. But there was a... yeah... There was a fair housing ordinance proposal was made and defeated.

[DH]: Several times it was defeated at the council level.

Did the first fair housing act that have some teeth in it, or was it passed as just sort of a...

[TS]: I wasn't involved by that time when that passed. I don't think it had much teeth in it.

[DH]: The first one I think was more or less window dressing, but eventually it got some teeth in it.

0:24:27 [KOD]: This is a little bit off topic, but still mentioned in that same vein. Mr. Coleman also said something about discrimination in the city cemeteries. Do you know if that was a... because he said it sounded like he was... they were talking about kind of tagging something on with this fair housing ordinance and he kind of laughed about skeletons sitting on a tombstone and what difference would it make...

[TS]: I don't remember that.

[KOD]: Ok.

[TS]: Not surprised to hear about it, but I don't have any recollections of that.

0:24:58 [DH]: Let's go back to mayor Allen. It was probably one of the most contentious times in South Bend. He was mayor here, '64 to '72, and he

was a Republican. You came in under Bruggner, a Democrat, and then you served under Allen also.

Now, my field is political history. African Americans accessing political power. And now Allen... reading *The Reformer* articles. Now, Mayor Allen... You remember *The Reformer* during that time was an African American publication. Rich Giloth was the editor of that for the longest time. I think it was in publication for three years. But Mayor Allen was at one time... in one publication he's a hero, the next time he's a villain. So, he seemed to walk a fine line between trying to do something that the African American community and placate the white community at the same time. Did you feel that when you were working with him?

0:26:03 [TS]: He asked me if I would be the chairman of his Human Relations Committee, and I agreed to do that and he pretty much left us alone. He didn't consult with us. He didn't talk to us much. I don't remember any... any words that ...

[KOD]: So, during '66 and '67 when there was quite a bit of unrest and there was some rioting, what were... were you still working with the human relations committee...

[TS]: No

[KOD]: Were you in any of the organizations dealing with civil rights?

[TS]: No, not after '65.

[KOD]: After '65. Ok, because I remember George Neagu mentioning something about you and Tom Broden being people that... he mentioned it as people who would stand up for causes and so forth...

[TS]: I may have done some work after that, but I was not in a committee position after '65. I'm sure I was involved in some stuff, but in terms of being a member of a committee, I wasn't.

0:27:13 [KOD]: Do you have any opinion about why, during those years... the tensions kind of came to a head? Was it because things weren't ever being addressed and...

[TS]: Well, that was happening all over wasn't it?

[KOD]: Right.

[TS]: We were no different.

[KOD]: Right.

[TS]: I don't know of any specific thing that happened. There is... I remember the riot out on Western... There was some criticism about the way the police handled that, but I don't know much... I don't remember much about that.

0:27:53 [KOD]: In '69 then, when the model... the committee organizing the Model Cities Program. Where you involved some way with that?

[TS]: I don't remember.

[KOD]: Because they had you listed as... that you were appointed as one of the organizers by Mayor Allen on that.

[TS]: I remember Model Cities programs. I don't have a memory of being on that committee.

[KOD]: Ok.

[TS]: And I don't think I was.

0:28:28 [KOD]: Do you remember any of the changes that might have been as far as demands, or some of the complaints after the riots in '66 and '67 by the black community? How those were addressed and maybe improved by the community or the administration?

[TS]: I can't help you on that.

[KOD]: Ok. Do you have anything else?

0:28:52 [DH]: Back to Mayor Allen. You said he had a hands-off approach to your committee, so he didn't interact with you but he didn't tell you not to do something either. You just went ahead and did what...

[TS]: Right. There were... I remember some projects that we did. We did a survey of all of the Boards of Directors of the voluntary organizations and community organizations to see what kind of African American representation they had, and we issued a report on that.

[KOD]: I think I saw that report.

[TS]: But I don't ever remember meeting with Lloyd Allen. Not that he thought... He liked the work that had been done in the past and, "You can be the chairman," and that was it.

0:29:41 [KOD]: So, when you had the committee where you were talking about as far as the organizations... Was that presented to anybody as far as for them... for improvements to be made?

[TS]: I think it was presented to the United Community Services. That was the umbrella. What I the name of that organization?

[KOD]: United Way.

[TS]: Yeah. It was presented to them and sent to every Board of Directors.

[KOD]: As I recall it said something about that there was there was a need for there to be more African Americans on... in key positions in these different organizations through the city, and I think it cited maybe five organizations that were kind of lacking in any kind of service. I think they only mentioned the Lions Club as the only organization that had black members as far as a service organization.

0:30:45 [TS]: I don't remember the details of that report, but that's one of the things that Allen's committee did. But I have no memory of Lloyd Allen and the committee working together.

[KOD]: Ok.

[TS]: I don't know if that jibes with what other people have said.

[DH]: You are the first person we talked to who actually worked with Mr. Allen so...

[TS]: I worked with him in the sense that he sent me to be the chairman. I said I would and that was all...

0:31:21 [DH]: Did you... of course one of the many aspects of achieving political power for minorities are job opportunities within the administration like Street Department, Police Department, Fire Department. Did you have any... did you witness any of that or did you... did you sense that there was changes in the city administrations between... Of course, you would have been... you came back... started your practice here in...

[TS]: '60.

[DH]: '60? So, you would have been at the end of the Voorde administration right at the beginning of the Bruggner.

[TS]: Bruggner. Yes. I know those were areas where both of those committees were concerned with. I'm not sure that there was much accomplished there.

0:32:10 [DH]: Ok, so. Not that you had a talk with Mayor Allen, but you don't remember Mayor Allen ever coming out publicly and saying we need to hire more blacks in the Street Department, or the Police Department, or the Fire Department.

[TS]: I don't remember that. He could have. I don't have a memory of that.

[KOD]: As far as... you mentioned something about a march. Was that one march, or more than one?

[TS]: For some reason there was there was a march downtown—I think in support of the fair housing movement whatever that was. And Roland Chamblee was there. We were right together, but I think it had something to do with the fair housing.

[KOD]: Was it. About how many people were there?

[TS]: Well it was a couple of blocks long.

[KOD]: Was it to the courthouse?

[TS]: I think it started at Howard Park, and went north or west and then down Michigan Street. I'm not... maybe to city hall, which was there at that time. And there may have been some speeches. I remember because my kids were little. I can't tell you what the result was.

0:33:38 [KOD]: Were there any other marches or any other kinds of demonstrations or anything else involved...

[TS]: Well there was a sit-in at the school corporation. That's where people were arrested, and I represented them. But that was not a part of the demonstration.

[KOD]: The youth council the NAACP council you represented?

[TS]: I represented one person that chose to go to trial and that would bind everyone else.

[DH]: That would be Barbara Harkness. And Mrs. Neagu was the sponsor for that.

[TS]: Ok.

[DH]: That event and she was arrested at the same time when they sat in. So, you represented basically the junior NAACP. I think that was a group in the high school, right?

[TS]: I think we lost, if I remember.

0:34:42 [DH]: Ok. I don't remember... I read some articles about the case. There was an incident at Washington High School. They sat in at the city school administration for the first time and they left peacefully. The second time, Mrs. Neagu was there with the whole group and they had to be forcibly evicted. There is a picture in the *Tribune* of Mrs. Neagu and Barbara Harkness who as a student in the back of a police car being taken to jail. How was... did you work with Mrs. Neagu at all?

[TS]: Yes. Yes. I knew...

[DH]: She was... you either loved her or hated her, I guess.

0:35:19 [TS]: Yes. She was... yes and George Neagu, who I think is in Michigan City now. Very nice fellow. And then there was a Minister in the Unitarian Church who was not the most politic.

[KOD]: Joe Snyder?

[TS]: Joe Snyder. So that... but I did represent them in that one... that arrest and frankly I can't remember the outcome.

[DH]: We'll have to look it up.

[TS]: There may have been some kind of resolution and it may have been because nobody went to jail and nobody paid a fine. So, I... but I can't remember what happened.

[DH]: I can't remember... Holt... Wasn't he the superintendent?

[KOD]: Yes, Charles Holt. For the schools...

[DH]: Charles Holt was the superintendent.

0:36:23 [KOD]: George Neagu mentioned, I guess, that when he came here too it seems like there was such a big gap in communication between the black community and City Hall too. Did you find that in the work...

[TS]: Sure.

[KOD]: Because it seems like he was trying to really push for like... I forget what he called them. The groups that would actually go to individuals' houses to kind of experience what other people living. Actually, bring people face to face so that you actually see who these other people are rather than thinking it was an alien group or something like that.

0:37:03 Do you think... how do you feel about the progress that the civil rights movement made in South Bend? Do you think that we are backsliding? Some people have said we are kind of backsliding. Do you think that's the situation today, or...

[TS]: Certainly better. You don't have segregated public facilities like you did in the '30s, and there was a real drive to integrate schools at one time. I'm not sure where that is now. You don't have segregated facilities like the Natatorium, so there is progress. Not enough, but I'm not sure I know what the answer is.

0:38:00 [DH]: I guess the question, are you satisfied with what you accomplished in the '60s?

[TS]: Well, I'm satisfied at the chance for blacks to be able to compete for private housing. That's changed. There may be individual attempts to discourage African Americans from moving to a neighborhood here and there, but by and large blacks—as far as I know—can buy houses in the private market.

And... there was a lot of... a lot of work we did with the realtors, now that I start to think back on that. A lot of things we had with them. And there... in the early '60s they...they were very hostile to housing integration.

The place where I lived which is the triangle down here bounded by Angela, Michigan, and Northshore—they would quite frankly say we can't

let them across the street. The idea of letting them across Michigan to move into that area.

0:39:19 [KOD]: And what was the basis for it? What was their reason? Was it strictly their financial...

[TS]: Sure, sure. They thought housing property values would be affected. So, the first black family moved into that area on the corner of Lafayette and Angela. And I represented the family, and Tom Broden represented the seller. So, that all could be accomplished without anyone knowing about it.

And that soon got around and then there was another family moved in on Wakewa, and that neighborhood is as stable today as it was then.

But they didn't hesitate expressing their feelings that we had to keep blacks out of this area.

0:40:06 [KOD]: And what did you use as your argument as far as... I'm assuming they would say something as far as property values going down and everything. Did you combat that with statistics showing that that was...

[TS]: Yes, we... we talked about that, and it didn't make much difference. The argument was you could get people who could afford this housing are going to move in and they are going to take care of it like anyone else. Which was true in that area and other areas too.

But I think that's changed. I think the Board of Realtors... first of all it's too hazardous to them to do stuff like that today. Now I don't know African Americans might...

[KOD]: As far as being brought up with litigation they have to tow the mark now so...

[TS]: I... I don't; know if that's true but I would think it is. I have not had any complaints that I couldn't buy a house. I mean I haven't had anyone come to me and ask me to represent them in the last twenty years. So, I think that... I think there is a change there.

0:41:20 [KOD]: Just going back real quick to when you were talking about when you were in high school and had problems as far as getting hotels and so forth in southern Indiana. Do you know for a fact that that was the situation in South Bend too as far as... I know I've had it mentioned before about

the theaters and sitting in the balcony and so forth, but do you know of anything fairly concrete as far as restaurants, theaters, hotels and anything like that?

[TS]: Not in the '60s. And I don't know... I don't have any memory in high school that there was that problem.

0:42:06 [KOD]: Because we've... listening over the different interviews we'll have some people say I went to Kresge's and I couldn't get... I had to just take carry out or... Everybody seems to say that we couldn't go to The Philadelphia, and things like that. But then we'll run across a few other people who will say, no, I had no problem at all, so I don't know if it was in isolated situations, or people just knew of this as kind of off-limits so that was never challenged or...

[TS]: I don't have any memory of that. I rarely went to the Philadelphia.

[KOD]: I wonder how they stayed in business? Evidently, somebody was going there.

0:42:46 [DH]: A couple of questions about politics. You said you were interested in politics. You decided you weren't going to be involved and concentrated on being a lawyer. Were you involved? I assume that you were a Democrat.

[TS]: I was a Democrat.

[DH]: Probably still are.

[TS]: Liberal.

[DH]: Liberal. And what was the Democratic machine like here in South Bend in the 1960s? Who... was it [Baldoni] who was...

[TS]: Ideal Baldoni was the chairman... was the chairman.³ Not sure when he started but he was the chairman in the early '60s. I was in the Young Democrats so I worked on some campaigns and the Kennedy campaign. But it just wasn't going to be my...

0:43:43 [DH]: He was the old school Democrat and you were the new young...

³ Ideal Baldoni was an employee of the Bendix Corporation and also had a long career in County and Democratic politics. For more, visit <http://southbendalumni.com/hall-of-fame-archives/>. (Accessed July 31, 2018).

[TS]: Well, I was young then...

[DH]: New ideas...

[TS]: The interesting... the guy who ran against Lloyd Allen. Ralph...
Forgot his name?

[DH]: I don't have his name but... I can look it up though.

[TS]: Well, he called me... he was debating Allen. This would have been in the fall of '63, and they were having a debate in one of the communities about the fair housing ordinances. So, Ralph called me and said, "Give me the arguments against it." Well, here are some arguments against it. I don't think they're sound, and so with that, you know it didn't make any difference that I was the Chairman of the Committee pushing for... So, I thought if this is what politics is like...

[DH]: He didn't have any problems calling you and asking you to give him some information...

[TS]: No.

[DH]: Guy had a lot of courage. I'll say that for him.

0:45:06 [KOD]: As far as... you said after 1965 you weren't really on any committees for anything. Is there any particular reason for after that...

[TS]: There was an illness in the family...

[KOD]: Oh, that's right you did say that.

[TS]: ...that I had to literally withdraw from all of that.

[KOD]: And at some point, there was not an opportunity to get back to it, or your focus had changed? Or you just...

[TS]: Well...

[KOD]: Or the need wasn't necessarily...

[TS]: No. I think when things resolved there I started to teach at Notre Dame and some other places, so I didn't have a lot of time for committee work. And frankly I got tired of committees. I just... Night after night.

0:45:49 [KOD]: What about it? Was it just that there was so much involvement, or the progress of them or lack of, or...

[TS]: Committee work is as you must know... and I was going virtually three and four nights a week on committees and I started getting tired of that.

[KOD]: It wouldn't leave you much time for anything else.

[TS]: No.

0:46:12 [DH]: Did you work with Jesse Dickinson?

[TS]: Yeah. He was a... there was another housing group that comes along in '65. Headed up by Newman.

[DH]: Housing Authority?

[TS]: Something. And I was working on that for a while

[DH]: Jess Dickinson was head of that for a while, housing authority...

[Audio ends]